

**Free and Open Access to Data/Information
A Federal Viewpoint (Civil)**

***Borders in Cyberspace: Conflicting Government Information Policies
and Their Impacts on International Meteorology***

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ABSTRACT

The U.S. Information Dissemination Principles (from OMB Circular No. A-130) have constituted a successful policy that has stimulated economic growth. Federal agencies are encouraged to actively disseminate all public information without restrictions or conditions at no more than the cost of dissemination. Federal agencies should take advantage of private, academic and other channels of dissemination, and use the best available technologies. The scope of economic decisions that are based on information derived from NWS data and products can be surmised from Professor John Dutton's assertion that "Weather impacts \$2.2 trillion [per year] of our economy." Commercial meteorology industry earned revenues are estimated to be about \$500M per year. In addition, according to the Weather Risk Management Association, the growing weather risk management industry is approaching \$8B per year. Despite the success of the U.S. policy on information dissemination, other countries are still restricting the amount and types of information available in order to charge fees for the information. Studies conducted for the EC have found that Governments make two kinds of financial gain when they drop charges: (1) higher indirect tax revenue from higher sales of the products that incorporate the public sector information and (2) higher income tax revenue and lower social security payments if there are net gains in employment. Efforts to recover the costs incurred during information collection and management in the UK and Germany have not been unsuccessful. In Europe, there is little commercial meteorology or weather risk management activity because most European governments do not have open access policies resulting in data not being readily, economically and efficiently available.